

Lowly penny costs U.S. most to make

By Roger Boye

UnCLE Sam continues to pay a mint for the lowly Lincoln cent.

The U.S. Treasury spent \$614 to produce \$1,000 worth of one-cent pieces in 1985, making them the most expensive of all circulating coins, according to a new government report: Nickels took second place, costing \$464 for each \$1,000 face value.

Both coins are expensive due to the metal content. Every two Lincolns contain nearly one-cent worth of zinc and copper at current metal prices while the nickel and copper in each five-cent piece cost more than a penny.

Quarters rank as the cheapest coin to produce, with the mint paying just \$106 per \$1,000 worth of coins. Half dollars cost \$109 per \$1,000 face, and dimes, \$122.

● Time is running out to buy special Bicentennial coin sets from the U.S. Mint.

After Dec. 31, workers will melt all unsold silver pieces dated 1776-1976 that remain in government vaults. The Treasury first offered three-coin uncirculated sets in 1974 to help commemorate the 1976 Bicentennial of the American Revolution.

To order a silver quarter, half dollar and dollar coin, send a check for \$9 to the United States Mint, P.O. Box 13316, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101. The silver in each set weighs .54 of an ounce, worth about \$3 at current precious-metal prices.

● The American Numismatic Association has acquired a toll-free phone number—[800] 367-9723—to assist hobbyists wanting membership information. The ANA is the nation's largest organization of coin collectors, with about 32,000 members; adults pay \$21 annual dues.

● Many old keepsakes will be sold at auction next Sunday [Nov. 2] during the annual show of the Oak Park Coin Club. Hours are 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Longfellow Park Recreation Center, Ridgeland Avenue and Adams Street in Oak Park. Club members also will exhibit collectibles and award door prizes; admission is free.